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Letter dated 25 September 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a communication dated 24 September 2001 which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

[Original: English]

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-31 August 2001) there were just over 19,500 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with contributions from all the NATO allies and from 15 non-NATO countries.

2. During the period under review, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained relatively calm. The Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to ensure a safe and secure environment throughout the area, and provided a significant presence during various religious ceremonies and commemorations held in August.

3. For example, SFOR supported local police and the International Police Task Force during religious ceremonies in Komusina and Mostanica involving more than 4,000 people in each case, and in Ozren when about 10,000 people attended. There were mosque openings in Mahala on the Republika Srpska side of the inter-ethnic boundary line, involving about 2,000 people; and in Sanski Most and Viranovici, involving about 5,000 people in each case, and in Nasici, when about 10,000 people took part. All these events took place peacefully.

4. On 6 August, SFOR provided security for the reburial of 170 Bosniacs in Visegrad. A thousand mourners crossed the inter-ethnic boundary line to attend the burial ceremony. There were no incidents. SFOR also supported the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to ensure a safe and secure environment during exhumations in areas near Trnovo, Gorazde, Sarajevo, Stari Grad, Vlasic Mountain, Zelini and Sanski Most; and assisted the Tribunal[1] in the transfer to The Hague of persons indicted for war crimes.

5. SFOR troops continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations using ground and air patrols. Other operations included area security, monitoring the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, monitoring the entity armed forces, conducting weapons storage site inspections, providing support to the international organizations in theatre, and collecting weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. The situation in theatre remained relatively calm throughout the reporting period, with the entities in substantial compliance with the military provisions of the Peace Agreement.

7. Inspection and verification of weapons storage sites remains one of the priority tasks of SFOR. During August, SFOR troops conducted 140 weapons storage site inspections: 62 Bosnian Serb; 31 Bosniac; 19 Bosnian Croat; 24 Federation; and 4 Federation Army Department. SFOR was denied access to one weapons storage site in the Republika Srpska on 21 August, but carried out the inspection on 30 August

[1] The Russian Federation confirms its special position on this matter.

after rescheduling the visit. The weapons storage sites guarded by SFOR since the spring of 2001 will be handed back to the Bosnian Croats in September.

8. SFOR troops monitored 278 training and movement activities during the reporting period: 75 Bosnian Serb; 129 Bosniac; 22 Bosnian Croat; 27 Federation; and 5 Federation Army Department.

9. Over the period, a total of 485 mine-clearing activities were monitored: 144 Bosnian Serb; 201 Bosniac; 83 Bosnian Croat; and 57 Federation.

Cooperation with international organizations

10. Within its capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, including the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Police Task Force, the Office of the High Representative, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

11. SFOR continues to support the efforts of the Office of the High Representative to establish common institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to assist in the effort to open airfields. SFOR is also supporting the State Border Service in preventing smuggling along the River Sava.

Outlook

12. The overall security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains under control. Rising tension among ethnic groups following the return of refugees and displaced persons continues to be of concern, especially in Republika Srpska and in cantons 7 and 10. In addition, the public school in Brcko will open to Bosniac and Bosnian Serb students during September in a move towards full integration. From recent experience it appears that large, peaceful religious ceremonies are possible; local authorities have shown an ability to manage such events.

13. The so-called third entity movement of the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) has reportedly written a constitution for a "Croat Republic" which has been announced publicly twice, and will hold a congress on 6 October to decide whether to hold a referendum for self-government. SFOR will continue to monitor events closely.